

**Alberta
Cattle
Commission**

Call Us At
(403) 275-4400

GRASS ROUTES

The Alberta cattle producer newsletter.

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Beef industry facing changes

There is growing recognition in Canada of the need to aggressively pursue a number of programs and initiatives to improve the quality and consistency of the beef products we produce.

This is not to suggest that our products are inferior to other beef producers. Every other beef producing nation is facing similar challenges. We produce some of the finest beef products in the world. However, there exists an unacceptable degree of variation in quality - particularly in tenderness, and concerns about meeting the specific supply requirements of various customers - particularly adequate supplies of AAA beef and smaller portion sizes.

The beef carcass by its very nature will have varying levels of quality by muscle type. End meats and/or rough cuts, particularly front quarter sub primals, are priced lower in Canada versus the United States. There is an opportunity to increase the value of these products and to use them to better serve customer niches such as the family restaurant sector and certain ethnic demands.

Product defects (injection sites, bruising, broken needles) or irregularities continue to contribute to significant direct cost to the industry as well as lowering the value of products affected by these problems. For

example, trim directly reduces the saleable weight and alters the appearance and saleability of the cuts from which the trim is removed. Of greater risk is the potential for these defects to find their way to the consumer and/or to become a media story.

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) has committed itself to serve in a number of roles to drive this process forward as efficiently and effectively as possible. The CCA will use monies from the NTS Opt Out Fund and the Industry Development Fund to initiate and recommend projects.

Canadian Cattlemen's Association Role and Initiatives:

1. The CCA is providing forums in which representatives from the entire industry and government can review, discuss, plan, and agree on priorities and actions to address these challenges.
2. The CCA will serve as a catalyst for change by providing information on these issues, needed actions, and direction on research needs and technology adoption.
3. The CCA will directly fund a number of research and technology initiatives. The CCA is currently funding work on the video image assessment (VIA) grading technology and the connective tissue probe to

Did you know?

Beef exports to the United States have increased by 20 million kg (or 30 per cent) for the first half of 1994 compared to the same period last year.

Strength from the ground up.

See **Beef industry**, Page 2

Producers encourage responsible animal care

The Alberta Foundation for Animal Care (AFAC) has started a new service called Animal Care ALeRT - a producer to producer, non-confrontational approach to resolving issues of unacceptable animal care. AFAC recognizes that the industry has a duty to set, monitor and encourage high standards of animal care and cannot afford to ignore or defend inhumane treatment. By introducing the service, AFAC hopes to increase public confidence in both the industry and its products while avoiding potentially damaging media incidents. The Animal Care ALeRT provides two basic services: an action line 1-800-506-2273, and trained resource teams. For more information contact AFAC at (403) 777-0445.



New producer communication initiative

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) is going to producers to help redesign a new communications program to better meet the needs of our producers.

Communication Consensus Project is a consultation process directed at finding out what cattle producers want and need from communications with the ACC. It is a process for gathering input from as many ACC members as possible and developing consensus on a course of action.

Throughout the project, producers will be given several opportunities to express their wishes. They will also receive feedback on what other producers are thinking about different issues regarding ACC communication with its membership.

The results of the project will provide a solid foundation on which to design the ACC's producer communication program. It will indicate regional trends as well as how to

allocate resources and budget to maximize benefits for our members.

Communication Consensus Project consists of three phases: seven regional roundtable focus groups, a questionnaire of approximately 7,400 producers, and a follow-up consultation with all participants.

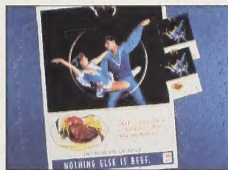
Focus groups were selected and convened in late July. Phases two and three will begin in late October. The entire process will be complete by May 1995.

The 7,400 producers who voted in the check-off plebiscite will be invited to participate in *Communication Consensus Project*. Producers who did not vote in the plebiscite but wish to participate in the project should call the ACC office to be added to the list.

If you have any questions about *Communication Consensus Project* call Producer Liaison committee chairman Margaret Jensen at (403) 788-2474 or the ACC office at (403) 275-4400.

Beef industry facing changes, continued

- measure tenderness. A task force of experts will develop an action plan to address the tenderness issue (both ante and post mortem) with the objective of reaching a minimum of 95 per cent consumer satisfaction (currently it is around 75 per cent).
4. The CCA will be actively involved in the transition to HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) as our inspection systems shift from organ examination emphasis to microbial control. The CCA will work with the industry to extend this process from pasture to plate while ensuring it enhances our international acceptance and hopefully leads to the elimination of reinspection costs to key markets such as the United States.
 5. The CCA will be representing the industry on issues such as grading standards and pursue equivalency agreements with the United States and options such as "grading to market". The adoption of new technology (VIA) is viewed as a key opportunity to move this initiative forward.
 6. The Beef Information Centre will work with the other sectors to encourage and support beef quality programs at the retail and foodservice levels. Research and development activities on new beef products, packaging, and case ready products will be accelerated.
 7. The CCA will work with the packing sector to accelerate the shift to individual animal assessment. The VIA system is considered to be a key development to facilitate this change.



New advertising campaign finalized

The Beef Information Centre (BIC) is in its 12th year of check-off funded beef advertising. Every year the BIC conducts a tracking study to determine the effectiveness of the last campaign. Over 600 consumers across the country were randomly surveyed.

Based on the results, plans for the '94/95 campaign include continued use of revised television ads featuring Olympic figure skating medalists Isabelle Brasseur and Lloyd Eisler.

Awareness levels of Brasseur and Eisler were at 56 per cent. Of this group, 64 per cent felt using the skaters as spokespersons was a good idea.

The Brasseur and Eisler ads left the message "beef is good for you" with 43 per cent of viewers. As well, 26 per cent associated the beef industry with the Olympics.

Compared to 1991 pre-Olympic ads, TV awareness is up 11 per cent.

1991	1993	1994
49%	56%	60%

Partnerships work!

The BIC has entered a promotion partnership with Kraft that will see the Canada Beef logo and three beef recipes appear on 1.2 million 750 mL bottles of Kraft's top three selling barbecue sauces. The promotion will take place for an entire year.

The 1993 joint promotion with Nabisco resulted in a 16 per cent increase in the sales of their featured products. The promotion required a joint purchase of Nabisco products and beef with a \$1.00-off coupon on beef thus benefiting both partners.

We want you as a delegate!

Nominations are now open for Alberta Cattle Commission delegate elections. A delegate is elected for a two year term and is responsible for representing the interests and concerns of producers in his/her area. Any eligible producer can run as a candidate. The nomination form below outlines the criteria for eligibility. Nominations close August 26, 1994. If you have any questions, call the ACC office in Calgary, 275-4400.

NOMINATION FORM FOR ZONE REPRESENTATIVES TO THE ALBERTA CATTLE COMMISSION

I hereby nominate:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

To run as Zone Delegate in Zone # _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

I am an *eligible producer:

Signed _____

(NOMINATOR)

I hereby accept this nomination and I am an *eligible producer.

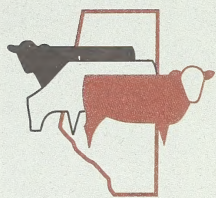
Signed _____

(NOMINEE)

*Eligible Producer:

- "Eligible producer" means a person who has, during 1993 or 1994, sold cattle in his or her name and paid a fee to the Commission or to another person on behalf of the Commission. A corporation is also considered a person. All "eligible producers" must reside in the zone in which they are voting.
- "Agent for an eligible producer" means a person who has been appointed to vote on behalf of a corporation. This appointment must be made in writing to the Commission prior to the vote being cast.
- Individual "eligible producers" cannot appoint agents for themselves. There will be no voting by proxy.

Please send the completed form and a 50-75 word resume to: Alberta Cattle Commission 216, 6715 - 8th Street NE, Calgary, Alberta, T2E 7H7. Phone 275-4400. Fax 274-0007. Nominations must be mailed or delivered to the office no later than August 26, 1994.



**Alberta
Cattle
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Environmental Stewardship Award

*Dewayne Good,
M Bar Ranch
1993 Environmental
Stewardship Award Winner*

You learn to work with your environment when you raise cattle in the dry Cypress Hills region of Southeast Alberta - just ask Dewayne Good, winner of the Alberta Cattle Commission 1993 Environmental Stewardship Award.

Dry conditions, a strong conservation ethic and family tradition have taught Dewayne how to manage his grass and water to benefit his cattle, range and the wildlife on his ranch. Overall, Dewayne's plan for success is simple - keep a year's worth of grazing in front of you by using moderate stocking rates and extensive water developments to spread the impact of cattle.

Dewayne, along with his wife Sharon and two children, is the fourth generation to take care of the M Bar ranch first started by his great grandfather in 1893. The Goods run 650 Hereford/Angus cows on 7,500 acres of deeded and

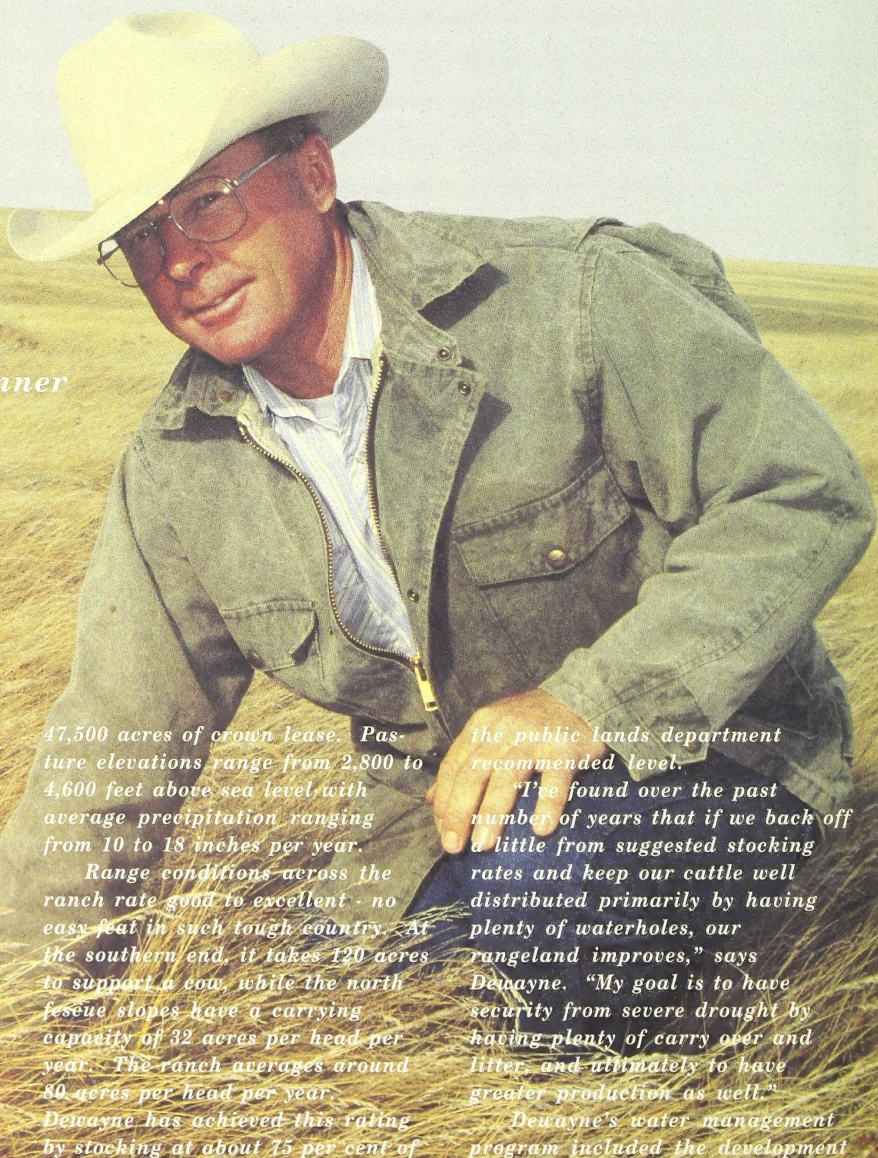
47,500 acres of crown lease. Pasture elevations range from 2,800 to 4,600 feet above sea level with average precipitation ranging from 10 to 18 inches per year.

Range conditions across the ranch rate good to excellent - no easy feat in such tough country. At the southern end, it takes 120 acres to support a cow, while the north fescue slopes have a carrying capacity of 32 acres per head per year. The ranch averages around 80 acres per head per year. Dewayne has achieved this rating by stocking at about 15 per cent of

the public lands department recommended level.

"I've found over the past number of years that if we back off a little from suggested stocking rates and keep our cattle well distributed primarily by having plenty of waterholes, our rangeland improves," says Dewayne. "My goal is to have security from severe drought by having plenty of carry over and litter, and ultimately to have greater production as well."

Dewayne's water management program included the development



of an energy efficient spring flood irrigation system and the construction of 18 new dugouts or dugout / dam combination waterholes to spread grazing pressure away from natural riparian areas across the entire ranch.

Wildlife is an important consideration in Dewayne's management program. He has fenced about four miles of shoreline for nesting waterfowl and reserves 700 animal unit months of forage for wildlife on critical winter and summer ranges each year.

A tour of the M Bar ranch proves that a conservation /stewardship ethic fits hand-in-hand with a well managed cattle operation. "I would never consider grazing the grass down to the

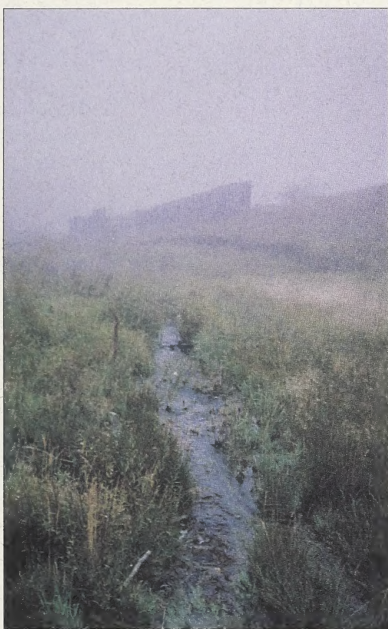


point there is nothing left for the wildlife," says Dewayne. "That would mean there would be nothing left for me the following year."

The M Bar ranch is a model for managing rangeland to resist the impact of drought. The ranch has been featured in range courses, tours and programs with organizations such as the Society of Range Management, the public lands division of Alberta Agriculture, Ducks

Unlimited and the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration.

Although it's nice to be recognized for the effort you've put into the land, Dewayne is quick to point out that in many ways he's just putting the collective wisdom of his neighbors to work on his place. "A lot of ranchers around here are doing the same things I am," he adds. "In fact, I learned a lot of what I'm practicing from them."



Water management is the key to healthy, productive range at the M Bar ranch.

The 1995 Environmental Stewardship Award

You'll be a major winner two ways if you enter the Alberta Cattle Commission's (ACC) 1995 Environmental Stewardship Award competition.

The winner will receive a commemorative gate sign and an all expenses paid trip for two from anywhere in Alberta to the 1995 ACC Annual General Meeting in Edmonton.

More importantly, you are sending a positive message about the beef industry to the general public.

The award recognizes cattle producers whose natural resource stewardship practices enhance the environment and improve wildlife habitat.

The competition is open to all Alberta cattle producers. Nomination

forms are available from the Alberta Cattle Commission office or from zone directors. You are encouraged to enter yourself or nominate another producer who you think may qualify.

Two independent letters of recommendation are required with one coming from an agricultural professional. Deadline for nominations is July 1, 1995 and the winner will be announced at the 1995 ACC Annual General Meeting, December 4 - 6, 1993.

Take this opportunity to share your environmental practices with other producers and tell the positive story about cattle producers' contribution to the environment.

Send nominations to The Alberta Cattle Commission Environmental Stewardship Award
216, 6715 - 8
Street N.E.
Calgary,
Alberta T2E
7H7 Phone:
275-4400, Fax:
274-0007.





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Trade hindrance removed

Effective immediately, Agriculture Canada and the U.S. Department of Agriculture no longer require Canadian cattle destined for slaughter in the United States to be inspected and certified by a veterinarian. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) lobbied for the change in order to reduce export costs and to expedite the movement of cattle across the border. U.S. federal veterinarians will continue to inspect shipments at border points and slaughter plants.

Foreign trade relations

Members of the CCA executive recently met with U.S., New Zealand, Australian and Mexican cattle producers in Denver for the Five Nation Beef Conference. Much of the focus was on reducing trade tensions between the United States and Mexico. Mexico

has imposed new certification and labeling requirements for U.S. feed and beef imports, and is considering investigating alleged dumping of U.S. product in Mexico. The United States has banned the importation of Mexican Holstein feeder cattle. The CCA, Mexican and U.S. cattle producers are trying to reduce trade tensions through producer negotiations so that formal retaliatory actions and disruption of the North American beef market can be avoided.

Beef now included in NISA

Provincial and federal ministers of agriculture met early July in Winnipeg and agreed to make NISA available to all primary agricultural producers, except for supply managed commodities, in provinces wishing to extend coverage under the program. This means that beef will be included for the 1994 tax year. The CCA is concerned that some provinces may opt out of the program, and that all commodities - including supply management - are not included. The CCA is seeking a whole farm program that is generally available to all producers in Canada in order to eliminate the risk of trade actions.

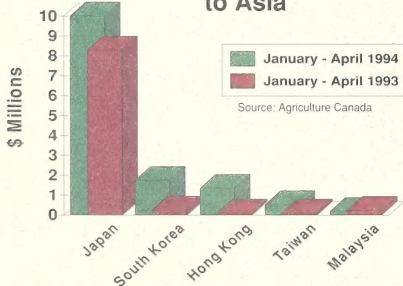
Cattlemen '94

Call to register for Cattlemen '94, September 14-16 in Kamloops, B.C. The theme of the CCA convention is **Challenges of Change** and will feature speakers from Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Japan and the United States. Don't miss this opportunity to attend sessions on beef quality and grading, foreign trade, and land rights issues. To register, call 244-4487.

Market Watch by:



Canadian Beef Exports to Asia



MONTHLY AVERAGES FOR ALBERTA

prices in (\$/cwt)	June average	May average	change	June 93 average	change
FED STEERS	81.07	86.01	-4.94	87.97	-6.90
FED HEIFERS	80.30	85.15	-4.85	86.38	-6.08
FEEDER STEERS					
300 - 400 lbs	142.90	145.13	-2.23	136.05	+6.85
400 - 500	135.60	139.96	-4.36	130.04	+5.56
500 - 600	127.80	133.85	-6.05	124.98	+2.82
600 - 700	121.89	125.08	-3.19	118.72	+3.17
700 - 800	111.18	114.53	-3.35	109.21	+1.97
800 - 900	102.91	103.35	-0.44	102.34	+0.57
900 +	90.39	95.07	-4.68	95.85	-5.46
FEEDER HEIFERS					
300 - 400 lbs	127.95	132.75	-4.80	124.13	+3.82
400 - 500	124.33	129.31	-4.98	118.39	+5.94
500 - 600	116.57	123.09	-6.52	113.24	+3.33
600 - 700	110.16	114.21	-4.05	108.72	+1.44
700 - 800	102.48	107.20	-4.72	104.13	-1.65
800 +	92.30	98.00	-5.70	97.35	-5.05

CANFAX is a non profit market information service that offers its members detailed weekly and monthly market reports and a member-only hotline to get up to the minute information. For more information call Anne or Keith at 275-5110.

ACC Market Information Service

Slaughter Cattle Information 274-4340
Feeder Cattle Information 274-4345

The Alberta Cattle Commission 216, 6715 - 8th St. N.E. Calgary, AB T2E 7H7 275-4400 Mail Registration Number 116432